

My Appropriations Committee staff worked very, very hard with both the Republican and Democratic side on the parts of this piece of legislation that required work from the Appropriations Committee. They have worked weekends, evenings—long, long days—drafting and redrafting and redrafting to make sure that people on both sides approved of what they wanted. Now, the American people expect us to vote. We are here. Let's vote.

I am happy to see Republican amendments or Democratic amendments come up. But it is one thing to talk about them on the news shows or on social media or trying to talk to the press in the halls and make sound bites; it is another thing to actually vote. Let's vote. Let's let people know where we stand. That is how the people in our State know where we stand.

Frankly, those who are afraid they may cast a vote that creates problems—but we are not here to cast only popular votes. I have cast more votes than all but one person in the history of this country. I have cast well over 16,000, almost 17,000 votes. I am sure I can go back over those votes and find some and say: Hmm, in retrospect, I might have voted the other way. But I voted.

What we are doing in not bringing this up and getting this done, we are trying to vote "maybe." I don't know anybody in my State, Republican or Democrat, who elected Senators to say: We want you to vote "maybe." No. We want you to vote.

It doesn't mean the people of my State will agree on every vote. I hope that they will agree on a lot of them. But I will represent my State. I will represent my conscience. But I will represent the Senate, and I will represent my oath of office. My oath of office is not to just sit here and do nothing but talk to the press and others; my oath of office is, I respect the Constitution, and I will vote. So let's hope they vote.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

INVEST IN AMERICA ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today, the Senate will decide whether to move the bipartisan infrastructure bill closer toward a final vote.

Like I said before, I am quite confident that, out of 100 U.S. Senators, there are 100 of us who believe the bill

is imperfect. This isn't exactly the bill I would have written on my own in my office, and 99 of my colleagues would say the very same thing. This is a compromise product crafted by colleagues with big, principled differences in a Senate with the narrowest possible split.

But in my view, what our early statesmen called "internal improvement" is a core government responsibility. The American people need roads, bridges, ports, and airports to build their businesses, build their families, and build their lives. Republicans and Democrats have radically different visions these days, but both those visions include physical infrastructure that works for all of our citizens.

As the Kentucky Farm Bureau wrote to me recently, the investments this bill will make are not just necessary; in many cases they are overdue. Our country has real needs in this area.

There are many outstanding amendments that are important, that would improve this legislation, and that deserve votes before the Senate is asked to vote on the final passage of this bill. The full Senate deserves its full chance to shape this important legislation. I hope Senators can work together in a bipartisan way to get more amendments up and continue improving this important bill. Our colleagues on both sides deserve to be heard.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. McCONNELL. The Democratic leader is indicating, in a few days, he will thrust the Senate into an ultrapartisan showdown over the staggeringly reckless taxing-and-spending spree that Democrats want to ram through later this year.

The size and the scope of Chairman SANDERS' socialist shopping list will make every disagreement we had in landing the infrastructure compromise look like a rounding error—new permanent welfare with no work requirements, reams of Green New Deal mandates, massive tax hikes that shrink wages and kill jobs, government meddling in childcare that would privilege certain families' choices over others, amnesty for illegal immigrants in the middle of a border crisis.

At a time Democrats' spending already—already—has inflation hammering American families, Republicans could not be more eager to debate our colleagues on all of these subjects. We can't wait to get Democrats on record over many more trillions—trillions—of dollars and reckless borrowing to fund socialist spending on radical policies that families are not asking for.

Our philosophy is the polar opposite. Republican policies would create good jobs, strong wage growth, and stable prices for middle-class families, just like our country had just a year and a half ago—the most pro-worker economy in a generation, just a year and a half ago.

Republicans want to give working families the tools and the opportunity

to build the lives that they want. Democrats want to force them to live the lives the Democrats want.

The stakes in this debate could not be higher, and very soon the country will see it aired out here right on the Senate floor.

The Democratic leader will be putting the full radicalism of the far left right here on this floor. He is making every one of his Members vote on nothing less—nothing less—than Chairman SANDERS' dream shopping list. Every American family will know exactly where their Senator stands.

NOMINATION OF DAVID H. CHIPMAN

Mr. McCONNELL. On one final matter, I have already discussed how the Biden administration has nominated a proud and proven opponent of American's constitutional rights to run the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

I don't think there could be any more evidence that David Chipman is the wrong choice to serve as the top Federal administrator of firearms policy. He has a long record of hostility to lawful gun owners, a variety of complaints from those who worked with him in the past.

How could it get worse?

Mr. Chipman has suggested radical and sweeping steps, like banning private sales that are lawful, overriding State laws, and imposing sweeping restrictions on a class of weapons he has yet to clearly define.

Among some current and former ATF agents, he has earned a concerning reputation as a "bully" and "activist" whose extreme views threaten to undermine the trust the Agency needs to conduct oversight. And sources within the ATF have also come forward describing alleged racially discriminatory comments the nominee made in the workplace regarding personnel decisions.

So even a few days ago, it was not difficult to realize this is an instance in which the Senate, on a bipartisan basis, should take a pass. But somehow, in just the last few days, it has actually gotten worse.

Earlier this week, news reports indicated that Mr. Chipman had failed to disclose to our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee a TV appearance he made several years ago. This wasn't just any TV appearance; Mr. Chipman had granted an interview to a propaganda network overseen by the Chinese Government.

A new letter to the Senate, signed by seven former career ATF agents, summed it up this way: Mr. Chipman's views and record would "create serious and long-lasting problems for the Bureau and the effective execution of its law enforcement mission."

The Senate has spent quite enough time flirting with this profoundly misguided nomination. The American people deserve a trustworthy steward leading the ATF, with a record of respecting their rights and respecting his or